

2010-6 – Juvenile and Criminal Justice Research and Policy Institute Grant Program

- Application deadline, May 22, 2009 5:00 pm
- JGA contact person: Joshua Weber, JGA Director, Josh.weber.dc.gov, 202-727-6552
- Eligibility
 - Non-profit or for-profit community based organizations
 - Minimum 5 years experience
 - Familiarity with District of Columbia's juvenile and criminal justice systems, public agencies, and service landscape
 - Demonstrated commitment to and experience providing research, data, evaluation, and policy support to these District stakeholders
- Funding
 - JAG Recovery Act (Justice Assistance Grant)
 - Up to \$800,000 to support 1 award.
 - 12 months commencing 10/1/09, FY2010
 - Match: no match requirement. However, willingness to match with cash or in-kind will be weighted in scoring.
- Key Criteria
 - Site visit to and peer learning exchange with the Washington State Institute of Public Policy
 - Core staffing, systems, administration, and other infrastructure needs to support the startup and ongoing operations and management of the Institute
 - Staffing and all other programmatic and administrative support needed to implement the three selected research projects
 - Funding for subsequent years, however, required to identify additional funding sources used to sustain the project/program activities
- Programmatic Reporting
 - Due by last day of the month of each FY Quarter, Dec. 31, March 31, June 30, Sept. 30 (anything not collected must be submitted with the next report)
 - Additional Recovery Act Performance Measures (pg 7)
 - Reimbursements withheld until reporting complete
 - Failure to comply could result in grant termination
- Financial Reporting
 - Electronic Request for Reimbursement accompanied by
 - Scanned supporting documentation
 - No later than 15th of month following end of Quarter, Jan. 15, April 15, July 15, Oct. 15 (pg 8)
- Monitoring
 - Minimum of annual site visit
- Application Deadline
 - Electronic application to Joshua.weber@dc.gov by May 22, 5:00 pm
 - Late applications will not be accepted

Questions and Answers from the Research and Policy Institute Bidders' Conference

General Introduction:

JGA met with a large cross section of government stakeholders and community based organizations working in the juvenile and criminal justice systems, (Federal and District of Columbia agencies, nonprofit service providers, advocacy groups, research organizations, and others) to help determine its funding priorities for its RFAs. What emerged from those conversations was a general feeling of dissatisfaction, partially due to the fact that the District of Columbia is one of the most complex jurisdictions due to the combination of District and Federal entities, with the level of juvenile and criminal justice data at the aggregate and individual outcome levels; a desire for increased accountability around the use of funds and outcomes; the belief that there is limited data collection analysis capacity in general; and a feeling that there is a lack of transparency around the operations and outcomes of the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

The product of these discussions was the issuance from JGA of a number of RFAs to address these issues. This particular RFA is a comprehensive way to address these issues, and was modeled from the the Washington State Institute of Public Policy, which is one of the premiere research and evaluation organizations in the country with a focus on juvenile and criminal justice issues and has a specific relationship with the Washington State government. The goal of this RFA is to develop similar capacity for the District of Columbia given that there are many local entities that have the expertise the District and the Executive Office of the Mayor need to make informed policy and funding decisions-making.

The expectation is that, rather than the creation of a new organization, this Institute will be a standing research program within an existing organization with expertise and experience conducting rigorous research, evaluation, and systems analysis and improvement projects. The Institute will be an independent agency but will have a specific close relationship with the Mayor's office and the policy analysts assigned to the juvenile and criminal justice agencies, and will take strategic direction from the Executive Office of the Mayor.

At the same time, the grantee will have to develop a strategic plan and balance the relationship with the Mayor's office and how to best present its findings while garnering buy-in from external government entities and the City Council. The key elements for applications then including: obtaining research balance and buy-in from systems stakeholders while producing findings that are useful, timely, relevant, and not skewed in any particular partisan manner.

Three types of projects are included in the RFA and will be part of the Institute's mission:

1. Empirical research projects (meta analysis, best practices, synthesizing data) rigorous empirical data

2. Evaluations: the District has benefited in only a limited way to date from rigorous evaluation of juvenile and criminal justice initiatives.
3. Coordination of systems role: the grantee will not overlap with CJCC but will likely need to work with them to define where it can best add value in this way. For example, there are evaluation findings and research related to juvenile and criminal justice issues in the District of Columbia, but not a central repository, particularly where new staff can review and benefit from past work. One project the Institute could take on is to find ways to have central info and serve as a resource for District of Columbia and national information related to juvenile and criminal justice best practices. The Institute could also take discrete research requests from District of Columbia agencies. We invite creative other ideas.

These funds are from the JAG Recovery Act, which comes with close scrutiny and transparency requirements. There is a continuing financial commitment from JGA in additional years. JGA Executive Director, Josh Weber will have a close relationship with the grantee. Monthly meetings and a working relationship with JGA and the analysts in the Mayor's office will also occur while the strategic plan and the Institute's initial projects are developed and refined.

Questions and Answers:

Q - Will the cost identified in an application be weighted in the scoring of the application (example: cash and in-kind)? This questions speaks to the impact of those organizations that will put up their own resources

A - Cash and in-kind contributions are weighted as a demonstration of the applicant's commitment to the project, but it is not the key to the decision. An organization's match, whether human or financial or other kinds of resources, speaks to the investment in the project by the applicant and that factor, rather than a dollar figure, is what is weighted in the review of applications.

Q - So the human vs. financial contribution depends on what is proposed?

A- Yes, we want to see a thoughtful budget plan explaining how this project will be embedded in your organization and how it will be supported.

Q - But, large organizations have more financial resources.

A - Yes, it will just depend and vary by application.

Q - The eligibility criteria, organization must have a minimum of 5 years of experience, but not necessarily in the District of Columbia?

A - Yes, applicants must have a minimum of 5 years of research and evaluation experience with juvenile and criminal justice activities in the District, but do not have to have been located in the District. However, the applicant for the Institute must be located

in the District, and a key component of the application will be demonstrating knowledge of the District of Columbia systems and stakeholders.

Q- Does JGA have the grant making authority or will JGA have to go through OCP (Office of Contract and Procurement)?

A - JGA has the grant making authority.

Q – How do you define a for-profit community based organization? Is there a certain size or other types of restrictions?

A - There are no specific restrictions related to for profit organizations other than the eligibility criteria that applies to all potential applicants.

Q - . How will this grant help to overcome some of the political and administrative hurdles that the District faces in coordinating government activity and uniting the efforts of various District and federal agencies?

A - . The District of Columbia does not want to fracture the existing systems landscape even more by adding a new player to the system. Rather, it is anticipated that there will be a role for the Institute to play in collection of data from existent entities and coordination of issues. The Institute will not be involved in the political relationships amongst or between agencies. The Institute should not make recommendations about agency deficits, but should make objective recommendations, not specific to the operations or performance of any particular agency, unless so tasked and agreed to with that agency. The Institute's role is to provide objective research and evaluation findings to inform policy, practice and funding decisions and not to get involved with the more messy details of how these policies or practices get coordination or operationalized within or amongst government agencies (as opposed to (RFA #2010-7, Juvenile and Criminal Justice System Data Indicators Project.

Q – This is not related to this RFP. Will the attendees at all the Bidders' Conferences be posted on the website, not just this one?

A – JGA will post the attendees for those Bidders' Conferences in which the attendees agreed to post their contact information. We are happy to accommodate that request of the attendees.

Q- Is the application to be single or double spaced?

A – The RFA did not say. Double spaced is preferable. Note that the 20 page limit is not inclusive of attachments but just encompasses the Program Narrative section.

Q- Explain the Independent Review Panel.

A – For all the RFAs there will be an independent review panels to obtain objective points of view on the merits of all submitted applications. The Mayor’s Office will also be part of this review. The review panel scores are advisory to JGA. JGA has the final decision. JGA and the Mayor’s analysts will be making the decision together.

Q – Will the review panelists be government agencies or outside of government other than the Mayor’s Office?

A. Likely for this RFA the additional reviewers will come from outside of government

Wrap-up by Josh Weber:

If applicants have any logistical questions they should contact Josh Weber (contact information above)

For these applications, we are looking for 1) an initial proposal of the structure for the Institute and 2) identification of the initial projects that the Institute will take on.

Do not feel that the proposed projects must be completed within twelve months. The strategic plan will come first. We hope the work will begin within a couple of months, but the long-term work will not necessarily be completed within the 12 month award. However, the application should include a proposed timeline and deliverables. The application should provide the applicant’s proposal for the structure of the Institute. Also, the application need not be tied to three projects but should feel free to propose more or less depending upon the project’s scope and complexity. Applicants are free to talk to the Mayor’s office and other government agencies about ideas and about the formal of their applications. Applications should speak to the various elements of the RFA; however, the application should reflect the expertise and creative thinking of the applicant.

By agreement, these attendees will be posted on the website to facilitate discussion among applicants.

Attendees:

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
June Kress	Council for Court Excellence	kress@courtexcellence.org
Peter Willner	Council for Court Excellence	willner@courtexcellence.org
Mark Ouellette	IFC International	mouellette@icti.com
Kwaku Atakora	CJCC	kwaku.atakora@dc.gov
John Roman	Urban Institute	jroman@urban.org
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